



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Design, Construction and Land Use

D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Numbers: 2405458 & 2405758
Applicant Name: Stephen Lee, for St. James Cathedral
Addresses of Proposals: 907 Columbia Street & 804 9th Avenue

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Master Use Permit for future construction of a 187 sq. ft. stair addition and an 80 sq. ft. entryway addition to a minor institution (St. James Cathedral). The project includes adding 4 parking spaces and minor expansion and alteration of existing courtyards, to include approximately 340 cu. yards of grading.

The following approvals are required:

Administrative Conditional Use—To expand an institution in a Highrise zone.
Chapter 23.45.122, Seattle Municipal Code

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☒ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS
 ☐ DNS with conditions
 ☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition
 or involving another agency with jurisdiction

BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity Description

The two project sites are located within a Highrise zone in Seattle's First Hill neighborhood and are a part of the campus of St. James Cathedral and Parish. One project site is located on the east side of 9th Avenue, just to the north of Columbia Street and abutting the intersection. The other project site is located on the southeast corner of 9th and Columbia. The first project site contains 47,040 square feet and is developed with the existing cathedral and rectory structures. The second project site is 14,400 square feet in area and is developed with the former convent building, but which more recently has housed administrative office and social service functions as well as a residential use.

The Cathedral site slopes from Terry Avenue on the east to 9th Avenue so that both the Cathedral and Rectory are perched well above the level of the sidewalk on 9th. The second floor of the Pastoral Care Center is level with the alley to the east, but the first floor of the structure meets a courtyard on the west which is slightly below the grade of 9th Avenue. Part of the current proposals is to adjust courtyard and path grades so as to obtain an accessible route of travel to each of the two sites.

The area in the general vicinity is characterized by a mix of multifamily residential structures and institutional buildings. All streets adjoining either site as all streets in the vicinity are improved with curb, gutter, sidewalk, and street trees.

Proposal Description

The applicant proposes to modify the existing courtyard between the Cathedral and the Rectory and the former Cathedral Grade School, now known as Cathedral Place, in order to facilitate the movement of elderly and handicapped persons through it and in particular to make the Rectory accessible to them. This renovation will entail creating a new 80 square-foot handicapped accessible entrance to the Cathedral Bookstore which is housed within the Rectory structure (MUP 2405758). In addition, renovation of the former Sisters of the Holy Names Convent across Columbia Street from the Rectory into a Pastoral Care Center will necessitate the removal of the existing stairs within the building. These are too narrow in width, spaced too close together, and do not exit directly to the outside. To meet life-safety concerns, the existing stairs will be replaced by two emergency exit stairs, one to be located within the existing building in the northeast corner, the other to be added on the south façade. The latter stair tower will add an additional 187 square feet to the structure (MUP 2405458).

The renovations will not add or expand functions but are meant to facilitate a redistribution of existing functions within the overall St. James Cathedral campus.

Surface parking for 4 vehicles is to be provided in surface parking access from the alley behind the Pastoral Care Center.

Public Comment

Notice of the proposed project was published on September 9, 2004, with a comment period running through September 22, 2004. One written comment was received during the public comment period.

ANALYSIS - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE GENERAL PROVISIONS

- A. *Only those conditional uses identified in this subchapter as conditional uses may be authorized as conditional uses in multifamily zones. The Master Use Permit process shall be used to authorize these uses.*

The Land Use Code allows this use in multifamily zones outright, but requires an Administrative Conditional Use approval when institutions do not meet development standards.

- B. Unless otherwise specified in this subchapter, conditional uses shall meet the development standards for uses permitted outright in Subchapter I.*

This proposal is subject to SMC 23.45.122, Institutions other than public schools not meeting development standards (Highrise structure width and depth and setback requirements).

- C. The Director may approve, condition or deny a conditional use. The Director's decision shall be based on a determination of whether the proposed use meets the criteria for establishing a specific conditional use and whether the use will be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property in the zone or vicinity in which the property is located.*

This decision shall be based on whether the proposed use meets the criteria for establishing a specific conditional use as described in SMC 23.45.122 A through D.

The criteria for expansion shall be satisfied, and the project will be conditioned to prevent any detriment to the public welfare or injury to surrounding properties.

- D. In authorizing a conditional use, the Director may mitigate adverse negative impacts by imposing requirements and conditions deemed necessary for the protection of other properties in the zone or vicinity and the public interest.*

The criteria described in SMC 23.45.122 A through D is used to evaluate the proposal and condition if necessary to protect other properties and the public interest.

- E. The Director shall issue written findings of fact and conclusions to support the Director's decision*

This report satisfies the above criterion.

- F. Any authorized conditional use which has been discontinued shall not be re-established or recommenced except pursuant to a new conditional use permit.*

This institution has existed and been in continuous use at its present site since 1905; therefore, this criterion is not applicable.

ANALYSIS-ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

Multifamily Zones

Section 23.45.090 of the Seattle Municipal Code provides that expansion of an existing institution not meeting development standards may be permitted as an administrative conditional use subject to the requirements of Section 23.45.122.

SMC 23.45.122 provides criteria to be used to evaluate and/or condition this proposal. They are categorized as: A) Bulk and Siting; B) Dispersion Criteria; C) Noise; D) Transportation Plan. Each of these criteria will be analyzed below.

- A. Bulk and Siting: In order to accommodate the special needs of the proposed institution, and to better site the facility with respect to its surroundings, the Director may modify the applicable development standards for modulation, landscaping, provision of open space, and structure width, depth and setbacks. In determining whether to allow such modifications, the Director shall balance the needs of the institution with the residential scale and character of the surrounding area.

The applicant is not requesting modifications from the required applicable development standards for modulation, landscaping, provision of open space, and structure width, depth and setbacks.

- B. Dispersion: An institution which does not meet the dispersion criteria of Section 23.45.102 may be permitted by the Director upon determination that it would not substantially aggravate parking shortages, traffic safety hazards, and noise in the surrounding residential area.

The boundaries of the existing St. James Cathedral and Parish are not expanding; the dispersion criteria are not applicable.

- C. Noise. The Director may condition the permit in order to mitigate potential noise problems. Measures to be used by the Director for this purpose include, but are not limited to the following: landscaping, sound barriers or fences, mounding or berming, adjustments to yards, the location of refuse storage areas, or parking development standards, design modification, and fixing of hours of use of area.

Any noise generated from the proposal is unlikely to impact the multi-family residential buildings within the immediate neighborhood. The new entrance to the Bookstore is located within the courtyard central to the block and surrounded by the various Cathedral buildings. The proposed Pastoral Care Center is surrounded on two sides by streets; a large surface parking lot belonging to Frye Museum lies across the alley to the east. A surface parking lot abuts the site to the south where the new stair tower is proposed. It seems unlikely that any noise generated by worship, fellowship or social service social activities within the St. James Cathedral campus will increase by these proposals or exceed in volume ambient disturbance levels. The noise impact associated with the worship space and function, although involving the greatest number of expected participants, would appear to be minimal external to the building. The new parking (4 spaces) will be accessed off the existing alley. Existing parking serving the cathedral is located both within structures and on surface parking lots, accessed through multiple entrances within a four block area, effectively dispersing the impacts of vehicle noise. Noise impacts associated with activities on either site will be effectively enclosed with existing and supplemental landscaping. No further mitigation is warranted.

- D. Transportation Plan. A transportation plan is required for institutions proposing expansions of more than 4,000 square feet and/or requiring the addition of 20 or more parking spaces. The

Director shall determine the level of detail to be disclosed based on the probable impacts and/or scale of the proposal. The transportation plan may consider the following elements, as well as other similar factors: traffic, parking area, parking overflow, safety, and availability of mass transportation.

The expansion on the Cathedral/Rectory site is only 80 square feet. The expansion on the proposed Pastoral Care Center site is only 187 square feet. The combined expansion on campus is only 267 square feet. Four additional parking spaces are proposed on the Pastoral Care Center site. A Transportation plan is not required for this expansion.

DECISION-ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

Based on the foregoing analysis and review, the proposal, as conditioned below, satisfies all relevant requirements of SMC 23.45.116 and 23.45.122 which govern administrative conditional uses in multi-family zones. The proposal, as conditioned, is not expected to be materially detrimental to the public welfare nor injurious to property in the zone or vicinity in which the institution will be established, and should be **GRANTED**.

CONDITIONS – ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

None.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: March 24, 2005
Michael M. Dorcy, Land Use Planner